

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: MARCH 5, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
MERLINO
CONOVER
DICKINSON
FRASIER
SIMPSON
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER, TOURISM
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS BROCK
TAYLOR
WOOD
ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR OF THE VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
DAVE KENNY, WARREN COUNTY BUSINESS OWNER
LAURA KOHLS, WARREN COUNTY BUSINESS OWNER
ANN MARIE CASTELLANO, THE WINGATE
CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
SARAH MCLENITHAN, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Kenny requested that Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, discuss matters involving the Festival Space at Charles R. Wood Park. Mayor Blais apprised he had applied to the NYS DOT (New York State Department of Transportation) for signs on Interstate 87 indicating the location of the Festival Space at Charles R. Wood Park. He stated representatives from the NYS DOT advised him they required resolutions of support for the placement of the signage along Interstate 87 from both the Village of Lake George and the County.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 20, 2015 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mayor Blais announced he had booked three more events for the Festival Space for 2015; he noted the Festival Space was booked every weekend between June 1st and Columbus Day weekend with the exception of one weekend in August, and he was awaiting word as to whether a national touring group would be interested in reserving this weekend for their event.

In regards to the \$25,000 in occupancy tax that had been earmarked in Festival Space funding, Mayor Blais advised it was his understanding that this funding was set aside specifically to assist with booking events for the Festival Space after the Village and Town of Lake George had their joint meeting and fully expended the \$170,000 in occupancy tax funds they had allocated and Mr. Kenny concurred. He said he had booked the National Bell Helmets Stunt Cycle Show for July 18-19, 2015. He explained bell helmets were the helmets they encouraged riders to wear when they went

mountain biking and so forth. He stated their event consisted of a two day mountain bike stunt cycle show. He added Mr. Quizmaster, who was a featured attraction every year at the New York State Fair would be performing both days in conjunction with the National Bell Helmets Stunt Cycle Show.

Mayor Blais advised they were working on putting together a craft show to take place on July 25-26, 2015 on the Festival Space in an attempt to encourage crafters to utilize the space, as it had been difficult to book these type of events. He stated a promoter from Albany had booked the space for a Festival of Fine Arts on August 29-30, 2015, which would feature sculptures, artists and so forth. He said a stage was required because there would be musical acts featured at this event, as well. He pointed out all three of the aforementioned events had requested \$1,500 in occupancy tax funding and he queried whether it was necessary to receive approval from the County prior to awarding the funds from the \$25,000 that was set aside for this specific purpose. Mr. Kenny explained the County had awarded the \$25,000 for promotion of events at the Festival Space; therefore, he stated, no further authorization was required at the County level. He apprised the County Attorney had assured him the funding could be utilized to attract events to the Festival Space. Mayor Blais pointed out the promoter from Albany had indicated about 90 of the featured artists for the event would book hotel rooms during the event. He added a column detailing every event scheduled for the Festival Space would be featured in *AAA Magazine*.

Mr. Kenny asked Mayor Blais to explain his request for funding for the County's share of the Elan Planning Study in the amount of \$6,510 for the stage at the Festival Space at the Charles R. Wood Park. Mayor Blais explained the proposal from Elan Planning was for a Performance Stage Conceptual Planning Study for the Festival Space at Charles R. Wood Park at a cost of \$10,500 which would include a determination of how the facility would be used, the capacity and level of service; a floor plan and architectural style; acoustical and operational considerations; and preliminary development costs. Mayor Blais apprised that approval for the Village's share of the costs (\$3,990/38%) had been received from the Village Board and he was requesting Committee approval for the County's share of the costs (\$6,510/62%). Mr. Kenny pointed out it was necessary to determine where the funding for the stage would come from. Mayor Blais said he would like to have the stage designed with a cost estimate so that he could apply for CFA (Consolidated Funding Application) grant funding for the construction of the stage and he noted the next round of funding was anticipated to be in the fall. He pointed out they had been highly successful in obtaining grant funding for the Festival Space at the Charles R. Wood Park; therefore, he said, he felt they were in good standing to receive grant funding for the stage. He added there were more funding sources available for the stage such as the program offered by the New York State Council of the Arts, as well as local programs for items such as stages and fine arts. He noted some of the grants discussed provided up to 90% funding; therefore, he stated, if a grant was awarded that required matching funds he would provide them through fund-raising efforts.

Mr. Merlino questioned what the approximate cost of the stage was and Mayor Blais estimated the cost to be between \$400,000-\$500,000 since the stage had to meet the criteria of several different types of events. Mr. Dickinson asked whether it would be a permanent stage and Mayor Blais replied affirmatively. Mayor Blais noted the acts had several different requirements for the stage such as dressing rooms, storage areas, built-in lighting, expandable sides, etc. He added a top notch stage was required in order to operate a first class facility. He reminded the Committee they could increase the usage fee substantially for the space once a stage was in place.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to authorize the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$6,510 from the Occupancy Tax Reserve to Budget Code A.6417 470, Contract, cover the County share of the Performance Stage Conceptual Planning Study

at the Festival Space at the Charles R. Wood Park performed by Elan Planning and forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Kenny noted members from the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition, Inc. were unable to attend today's meeting due to an emergency that occurred at the Glens Falls Civic Center. He advised they would provide a report on their activity at next months Committee meeting.

Dave Kenny, Warren County Business Owner, asked whether the revised contract with the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition, Inc. would be placed online or made public. Paul Dusek, County Administrator, apprised he would ensure that the revised contract was posted online.

Mr. Conover advised he felt it was necessary for the Committee members to be aware that the County Administrator had reached out to the City of Glens Falls to extend any assistance the County could provide relative to the damage that was sustained to an exterior wall at the Civic Center. Mr. Dusek stated Mike Mender, Assistant to the Mayor of the City of Glens Falls, had indicated to him they had the situation under control; however, should they require the County's assistance they would contact them. He said the press reports today indicated the City was managing the situation.

Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk, Tourism, mentioned she had prepared the voucher for the first quarter for the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition, Inc. Mr. Kenny stated the matter would have to be discussed at the next Committee meeting since they were unable to attend today's meeting.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board